

Jean Pugh Shipman AHIP, Medical Library Association President 2006–2007



"It's passionately interesting for me that the things that I learned in a small town, in a very modest home, are just the things that I believe have won the election" Margaret Thatcher

In 1969, Orrstown, Pennsylvania (population 300), had one intersection, one bank, one general store, one elementary school, one post office, and two churches. It also had

one determined twelve-year old girl, now known as Jean Pugh Shipman.

At that time, library services in Orrstown consisted of two shelves of books housed at the bank, dropped off by the county bookmobile once a week, weather permitting. Busy sixth grader Jean noticed that the elementary school was weeding its collection and disposing of unwanted gift books. She

gathered three boxes of books, waited for the bus ride home, and soon began her first stint as a library director, checking out books to her friends from her basement at home.

So what does this tell us about our new president? From her beginnings in a small town in rural Pennsylvania, Jean honed the characteristics that she is known for today. Colleagues, friends, and family know Jean as hard working, ethical, enthusiastic, and committed to solving problems and ensuring that her visions become realities. She is a team player, but she likes to be on the winning team.

**"Your work is to discover your work and then with all your heart to give yourself to it"
Buddha**

The call to librarianship was strong: Jean worked in the library at her high school and was inspired by her mother's work as a library assistant II in government documents at Shippensburg University. By the time she traveled to her entrance interview for Gettysburg College in 1974, she had focused her interest further: medical librarianship. After informing the admissions counselor of her interest in the field, she was told that they did not offer a library science degree at Gettysburg. The seventeen-year old did not miss a beat and replied, "Yes, I know. I will get my undergraduate degree in biology and will get my master's at a library school elsewhere." She had found her work and was ready to give her heart to it.

Jean graduated cum laude from Gettysburg College in 1979 with a bachelor of arts degree in biology. She immediately moved to Cleveland, Ohio, to attend library school at Case Western Reserve University. She specifically chose Case Western because they had a health

sciences specialization track. Jean graduated in August of 1980 with a 4.0 grade point average, her master's of science in library science, and a job as an entry-level reference librarian at Welch Medical Library, Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, Maryland, thanks to the Medical Library Association's (MLA's) placement service.

Jean remained at Johns Hopkins for the next eight years, serving in a series of increasingly responsible positions at a very exciting time for health sciences libraries in general and specifically for Welch Medical Library. Integrated Advanced Information Management Systems (IAIMS) had emerged as the big idea for the decade and one of its creators, Nina Matheson, AHIP, FMLA, came to Welch as its director. The IAIMS model originated from the 1982 "Matheson-Cooper Report," commissioned by the Association of American Medical Colleges with support from the National Library of Medicine (NLM). The report recommended approaches to planning for the future of information systems in academic health environments.

From entry level, to senior reference librarian, to access librarian, and finally to supervisor of the Psychiatry/Neurosciences Library at Johns Hopkins, Jean was able to work in a live laboratory environment for IAIMS concept development. She participated in over thirty library committees and chaired several, was a member of the strategic planning committee composed of supervisors and the library director, and developed a Psych/Neuro Core Concept database, a quality-filtered subject specialty bibliographic database. During this time, Jean's view of the possible roles for health sciences libraries grew to have no boundaries and her understanding of the role of leaders became clear.

In 1988, Jean became library and audiovisual services manager at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center, Baltimore, Maryland. In this role, Jean was able to gain experience in the opportunities and challenges available to hospital librarians. She

planned and administered activities associated with directing the daily and long-term operations of a 365-bed hospital library, codirected the continuing medical education (CME) program, was responsible for the patient education closed-circuit television system, and coordinated meeting room scheduling and associated meeting services for the hospital.

In 1990, Jean had the opportunity to move to a position that allowed her to apply her knowledge and skills in academic health sciences libraries as well as her new understanding of the clinical necessity of strong hospital libraries. Jean went to work as the resource management coordinator at the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM), Southeastern/Atlantic Region, (Region 2), located at the University of Maryland at Baltimore, Health Sciences Library.

At this point in her career, Jean was active in MLA's Mid-Atlantic Chapter, but it was her work with the NN/LM that allowed Jean to meet health sciences librarians and health administrators throughout a thirteen-state region. Jean oversaw the Loansome Doc training and implementation for Region 2. She also was given the opportunity to learn directly about NLM's continuously evolving role as a partner with health sciences libraries. It was here that Jean honed her skills in advocacy, project coordination, and contract negotiation. She also learned about grace under pressure. According to Faith Meakin, AHIP, FMLA, executive director of Region 2 at the time:

But as serious as she is about the work, she also knows how to enjoy herself and not to beat herself up over things that cannot be changed. In 1990, the NLM contract was up for renewal and we were involved in the development of the proposal and the budget. I don't remember the due date for the proposal but I do know Jean and I had to go to the MLA annual meeting and in between assignments and papers presentations we would rush back to the hotel to pick up the portion of the proposal our administrative assistant had sent via email. We had been working for an

extraordinary productive two hours or so when the lap top just up and died. We lost all of the budget work we had done over the last several days. After pulling our hair out for about fifteen minutes, Jean looked at me and said, "Nothing can be done, let's go party." And so we did.

Refreshed and renewed from celebrating with MLA colleagues, they returned to the budget and finished. Faith knew she did not need to worry:

Jean is an extraordinary individual. She has an unbelievable capacity for work and is both practical and creative. Jean demonstrates the highest level of dependability and drive. She knows what needs to be done and does it well. She also demonstrates great flexibility in being able to shift gears easily between assignment and activities. A very good quality to have in an MLA president.

In 1993, for the first time since she left home for Gettysburg College, Jean moved, not because of a step in her professional career, but to ensure her personal happiness. Mark Shipman, Jean's husband of five years, accepted a transfer with his company to Seattle, Washington, and Jean and Mark were off to the West Coast.

Before leaving for Seattle, Jean was hired by the Health Sciences Libraries, University of Washington (UW). Initially serving as outreach information services librarian, she soon became acting head of access services and eventually associate director for information resources management. As in the past, Jean was working in exciting times for health sciences libraries in general: emerging technologies for electronic document delivery, negotiation of licenses for access to electronic resources, and, specifically for the Health Sciences Libraries at UW, licensing of content for the creation of unique resources, implementation of a portable document format (PDF) desktop document delivery service, and management of a large staff partaking in many exciting projects.

Debra Ketchell, AHIP, was the

deputy director of the Health Sciences Libraries, UW, at that time.

Jean looks at libraries as a business with clients, managing services for maximum advantage. My early experience with Jean was using this business sense to push the digital content delivery model. She provided leadership for transition rather than waiting in the middle of the pack. For example, at UW she built a document delivery program with outstanding service for both internal and external clients.

When you first meet Jean, you think "here's a gentle, quiet person" but in fact she is solid steel. For example, I've seen her get exactly what library clients wanted through determination, persistence, and enthusiasm for the negotiation.

When asked what should be expected from Jean as president of MLA, Ketchell replies:

My expectation is that she will be a good communicator, negotiator, and idea builder. MLA needs to serve librarians in throwing off the old mantle in a rapidly changing world that leaves the future role of libraries undecided.

Jean had been working in health sciences libraries for twenty years when in 2000 she accepted the position of director, Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences, and associate university librarian, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Libraries, in Richmond, Virginia. Jean has brought her years of experience to this position and relishes the opportunity to develop and advance library services and collections in support of research programs and the educational curriculum. Jean assists with VCU Libraries' overall strategic planning, governance, administration, and budgeting. She has successfully pursued external funding opportunities, developed donor relations, and has accomplished renovations and remodeling for the Tompkins-McCaw Library. Jean is building a strong commitment at her library to consumer health resources and services and manages the operations of the Community Health Education

Center at the VCU Medical Center and the Women's Health Resource Center at a satellite clinical facility. Since 2003, Jean has been coprincipal investigator of the Community Outreach Information Network (COIN) that is working to improve health in central Virginia by bringing information to consumers.

John E. Ulmschneider, university librarian at VCU Libraries, says:

She is a vision-driven leader who pursues her vision with unrelenting creativity and the deepest type of commitment. She is indefatigable in her dedication to the vision. When you meet Jean, you see a sweet, nice person who is careful and attentive to others. Her wonderful warmth does not stand in the way of her determination to reach a goal. Jean is one of the best hires I ever made.

What does Ulmschneider think is to be expected from her as MLA president?

Jean is a results-oriented person who engages in the process but wants to see discussions result in something quite real, a result that people can touch. She has a grindstone point of view and a leadership point of view. Expect specific leadership and results.

"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give" Sir Winston Churchill

Jean has been an MLA member since 1980 and has approached her membership with drive and commitment to the association. She has served over thirty-five times as an elected officer or committee member for various sections, chapters, and the national association. From 1999 to 2002, Jean served on the MLA Board of Directors. While on the board, she served as secretary from 2000 to 2002, board liaison and member of the Task Force to Plan Recruitment for the Twenty-first Century Workforce of Health Information Professionals, and board liaison to the Membership Committee and the Mentoring Program Task Force. From 2001 to 2002, Jean served as chair of the In-

formationist Conference Task Force and continued to serve as a member of the Task Force on the Information Specialist in Context from 2003 to 2005. In her role as chair of the initial task force, Jean was conference planner and action agenda developer for the Informationist Conference sponsored by MLA and NLM.

Jean has given to the librarianship discipline through her scholarly activities. She has edited two issues of *Reference Services Review* on the "Emerging Roles of Health Sciences Librarians" that won the 2005 Emerald Literati Club Award for Excellence, *Reference Services Review*, Highly Commended Special Issue, as well as the 2006 MLA Ida and George Eliot Prize. She has authored or coauthored more than 24 articles, 18 posters, and 3 MLA continuing education courses and has made over 30 national and regional presentations. Since 1995, Jean created and maintains the "Document Delivery Suppliers" Web document <<http://www.library.vcu.edu/tml/docsupp/>>, which is a frequently visited site for help in navigating this dynamic industry. She has done all of this with a joy for sharing information and a deep love of learning.

Jean also gives to her family and friends. She enjoys some solitary activities, reads, works in her garden, relaxes in her gazebo, and plays piano, organ, and saxophone, but Jean loves best the time spent with her husband Mark and their cat, Madrona. Mark and Jean love to travel and particularly enjoy day-tripping in their plane. Mark is an avid pilot and Jean is his copilot. It surprised no one when they thought it would be great fun to move back east by flying across country from Seattle, stopping along the way and looking at the United States from "see" level. Jean loves to play tennis, participates in a neighborhood book club, experiments in the kitchen with new cuisines, and loves to entertain friends and neighbors.

So now we must ask, how does she get so much accomplished? One word. . . caffeine. Ask anybody

who has ever worked or played with Jean. She loves everything about tea and coffee. She even has a tearoom in her home. If MLA is meeting in a city with a tearoom, at some point, on one day, she will leave her duties long enough to have afternoon tea. She will take you with her. When I interviewed her for this profile and we were

talking about all of her exciting achievements with her colleagues at VCU, she mentioned under those accomplishments the implementation of a library coffee service. I know there are legitimate reasons for establishing that service. I know her patrons are delighted and that it brings in revenue. But I am willing to bet the first person in line

each morning is Jean and the last cup sold each day helps fuel our president.

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